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ABSTRACT

Consultants in change agent roles frequently overlook the importance of adequate descriptive data on the target systems they seek to influence. The state of an organization's health may operate to nullify the best of planned intervention efforts. Survey data from a large, nonpublic, metropolitan high school provided consultants from the Center with a favorable prognosis for planned change efforts in the school. Staff and administration attitudes toward six areas of possible educational change are predicted from scores on the eight subtests of Halpin's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire. (Author)

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"Educational practitioners need not assume that change in the systems with which they are associated must be planless, automatic, or arbitrary; if we know more about educational innovation, the management of change as a planful process becomes more likely."[1]

Citing the continuing paucity of reliable information regarding change in schools, Sarason has made a recent plea for better descriptive data focusing on the culture of the school and the change process.[2] Sarason argues for more thorough case studies of schools using field study methods.

Although the particular empirical findings reported in this paper consist primarily of data from responses to a questionnaire, these findings are selected from an in-depth case study of a broad-scale attempt at planned change in a large, non-public, religious-affiliated high school in a metropolitan, suburban-urban setting. These selected data are derived from a more comprehensive study of the school incorporating most of the methods of modern anthropological field study —— observation, interview, and survey —— data collected as part of a developmental project contract between the school and the Center for Educational Change through Organizational and Technological Development.

The empirical findings reported here consist of data from a questionnaire administered to the school's faculty and administration at the beginning of a workshop at the school involving the Center. Included on the questionnaire

were items tapping attitudes toward six areas of educational change, Halpin's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ),[3] and several items seeking demographic information from the respondents.

The Larger Study

At the invitation of the school's administration, two consultants from the Center spent one full day in observation of the school four weeks prior to collection of the questionnaire data. Data gathered during the day's visit to the school included those resulting from semi-structured and open-ended interviews with administrators and teachers. Field notes from the day's observations included a record of topics of conversation from various group meetings; identification of individuals who initiated and participated in conversations; seating charts of participants in the various group meetings; identification of those members of the school staff who first greeted the consultants; the order in which the school's staff were introduced to the visitors; and other data thought to be of particular importance. In addition, sample copies of available printed materials from the school were collected. These documents included copies of the student newspaper, the faculty newsletter, and a handbook describing the school. The handbook had been prepared for a recent visit by a team of evaluators representing the regional accrediting association. This team of evaluators had submitted an interim report to the school staff and administration recommending a number of changes at the school.

In addition to their one-day visit to the school, the consultants had engaged in numerous telephone conversations with the principal and one of the teachers. The teacher was also a department head and chairman of a

committee of teachers and administrators professing a commitment to the planning of broad-scale changes at the school. In fact, it was this latter contact which initially prompted the consultants' interest in the school.

Both the principal and the teacher acting as chairman of the change committee spoke convincingly of the need for change at the school and solicited the help of the Center staff in fomenting such change. The principal, a newcomer to the school, appeared to view the interim report from the regional accrediting association's evaluation team as a mandate for change. The principal repeatedly referred to the report as supporting his perception of the need for more "flexibility" in the school's instructional program. Citing the need for the school to become less traditional in its approaches to education, the principal frequently spoke of his interest in having the staff adopt the practices of team teaching and modular scheduling.

Some of the members of the committee exploring ways of changing the school spoke of their desire to exploit the school's ETV system to better advantage. The committee members also indicated an interest in invoking independent study and inquiry approaches to instruction at the school. Recurring themes of conversation with the principal and the committee chairman centered on the need for flexibility and innovation at the school.

The Questionnaire Study

Despite the information gained from these various sources, early in their contacts with the school the consultants felt the need for empirical data of a different sort. While the one-day observation of the organization had provided them with a kind of preliminary feel for the climate of the school, the consultants knew that a more exhaustive field study of the

organization was required before reliable patterns of behavior and feelings might emerge.

The consultants were aware that sometimes clients' professions of the need to change belie somewhat less than genuine interest in the subject,[4] and they were sensitive also to the possibility that the state of the organization's health[5] might seriously impede the sincerest change efforts of a well-meaning minority.

Consequently, as part of their first formal intervention with the staff of the school, the consultants planned to administer a pre-test questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisting of six items tapping attitudes toward educational changes in the school, the 64 items from Halpin's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ), and several items seeking demographic information. The questionnaire was administered by the consultants to all members of the faculty and administration in the school's auditorium during the opening session of a one-day workshop held at the school in the spring of 1972.

In their introduction of the questionnaire and the workshop to the respondents, the consultants attempted to avoid any hint of identificatior with the principal's stated desires for school change or the stated desires of the committee interested in school change. The questionnaire was introduced merely as an information gathering device to help "in getting at faculty and administrative staff perceptions involved in planning for possible school change."[6] Administration of the instrument required approximately 35 minutes.

The total number of usable questionnaires returned for data analysis was 130. A preliminary analysis of selected responses was begun immediately,

for the consultants proposed to use Miles' survey feedback intervention strategy[7] later in the day's workshop as a means to focus participants' attentions on their own perceptions. This was calculated to free-up communications within the organization and get an exchange of dialogue started.

Findings

The 64 original Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) items, plus the six items tapping attitudes toward the use of modular scheduling, computer assisted instruction (CAI), inquiry approach, etc., were analyzed on an item basis. This was accomplished by subjecting the 70 items to a Likert scaling process.

The 64 items of the OCDQ were then assigned to the original eight OCDQ sub-test dimensions derived by Halpin.[8] The eight sub-test dimensions consist of four factors which describe the principal's perceived behavior and four factors which describe the teachers' behavior. The four sub-test dimensions describing the principal's perceived behavior are labelled Aloofness, Production Emphasis, Thrust, and Consideration. The four sub-test dimensions describing the teachers' perceived behavior are labelled Disengagement, Hindrance, Esprit, and Intimacy. The eight sub-test scores standard scores then were used to develop a three-factor varimax rotational matrix. Finally, the eight sub-test scores were used to develop correlation coefficients between the OCDQ sub-test dimensions and the six attitudinal items on educational change.

The consultants' confidence in the reproducibility of the eight sub-test factors was upheld when it was found that the intercorrelations between

the school's item-subtest data and Halpin's original item-subtest data[9] were closely comparable. (See Table 1 below.)

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Further confidence in the validity of the OCDQ was inspired when it was found that Halpin's original three-factor solution or explanation for the eight subtests[10] was recovered to some extent from the large, non-public high school data. (See Table 2 below.) Halpin's earlier three-factor solution had been derived from OCDQ data on 71 elementary school staff members. Table 2 shows the comparability of the two factor structures.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The three-factor solution provides encouragingly high estimates of reliability for the eight subtests as used with the large, non-public high school staff members.[11]

Concurrent validity of the OCDQ, as used with the large, non-public high school staff, is surprising. In a regression equation, the OCDQ subtest scores accounted for 36 per cent of the variance in the attitudinal change item on use of independent study, for example. Table 3 below indicates the percentage of variance accounted for in each of the six attitudinal change items by the eight subtests of the OCDQ.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

The OCDQ subtests of Disengagement, Hindrance, and Consideration accounted for most of the variance explained in all six educational change items.

Finally, the OCDQ data seem to square with the researchers' earlier impressions of the school's climate picked up during their one-day observational visit to the school. The school's OCDQ subtest score profile approximates that which Halpin has labelled a Controlled Climate. This, in itself, is interesting, for if other OCDQ research findings are any kind of a bench mark, the probability of a large, secondary school such as the one studied here achieving a Controlled Climate profile on the OCDQ is slight indeed. Sergiovanni and Carver, for example, in their study of 36 large high schools in Illinois, found that none of the schools exhibited profiles toward the Opened end of the organizational climate continuum (Open, Autonomous, or Controlled). (Halpin classifies the Controlled climate as one approaching the Opened end of the Opened-Closed organizational climate continuum.) As described by Halpin,

> The Controlled Climate is marked, above everything else, by a press for achievement at the expense of social-needs satisfaction. Everyone works hard, and there is little time for friendly relations with others or for deviations from established controls and directions. This climate is overweighted toward task-achievement and away from social-needs satisfaction.[13]

As Halpin further points out, the principal in this climate is perceived as being somewhat dominating and directive, gaining a high score on Production Emphasis. He relies on impersonal directives to establish standardized ways of accomplishing tasks and is not perceived as seeking to satisfy the group's social needs (low Consideration). The principal in the Controlled Climate is seen as trying to move the organization by working hard himself (average Thrust), delegating few responsibilities. Leadership acts are perceived to originate mainly from the principal, rather than from the group.

The teachers in the Controlled Climate are seen as being completely en-

gaged in the task. They are there to do a job and expect to be told how to do it (low Disengagement). Teachers perceive paper work as being designed to keep them busy (high Hindrance) and there is little feeling of camaraderie (low Intimacy).

On the basis of these findings the consultants possess feelings of optimism for the chances of genuine planned change to take place within this organization. As Halpin points out, while leadership acts emanate primarily from the principal, rather than from the group, many school faculties actually respond well to this type of climate.[14] Since morale (Esprit) is high in the Controlled Climate, Halpin classified it as being more Opened than Closed.[15]

Conclusions

The findings reported here have a number of rather interesting implications. First, the OCDQ as used with the large, non-public high school staff in the present study seems to possess strong face validity. The OCDQ data conformed closely to the consultants' earlier impressions of the school's climate gained through their observational visit. This in itself is an important finding, for Carver and Sergiovanni recently have concluded that the OCDQ is unsuited for use with large secondary schools.[16] This study's findings challenge this view.

Further, the OCDQ subtest scores do predict staff attitudes toward six educational change attitudinal items. Andrews, using both elementary and secondary schools, has been one of few researchers to date to advocate the use of OCDQ subtest scores.[17] The present study's findings, focusing on one secondary school, indicate that sizeable proportions of variance in the six change items are predicted by scores on the eight subtests of the OCDQ. While Halpin has argued that it may be premature to use the OCDQ as a diagnostic tool with single school organizations,[18] the present findings indicate that this may be a con-

servative view. It will be interesting to see what actual changes in educational practice eventually manifest themselves in this particular school. The OCDQ prognosis seems favorable, but subsequent follow-up studies by the consultants will tell the story.

Finally, the comparability of the subtest intercorrelations between OCDQ data from the large, non-public high school and Halpin's earlier data from the 71 public elementary schools indicate the possible genotypical descriptive value of the OCDQ. Halpin, through his invention of concepts, may well have uncovered a number of generic, universal dimensions which may be applied, as he suggests, in describing the climates of many different kinds of organizations and in predicting the possible susceptibility of these organizations to planned change.

NOTES

1. Matthew B. Miles, "Educational Innovation: The Nature of the Problem," in Matthew B. Miles (ed.), Innovation in Education (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1964), p. 13.

2. Seymour B. Sarason, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), p. 20.

3. Andrew W. Halpin, "The Organizational Climate of Schools," in Andrew W. Halpin (ed.), Theory and Research in Administration (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 131-249.

4. See Donald J. Willower, "Educational Change and Functional Equivalents," Education and Urban Society, 2 (August, 1970), p. 385, for a discussion of some of the latent functions of educational change.

5. Matthew B. Miles, "Planned Change and Organizational Health: Figure and Ground," in Richard O. Carlson et al. (eds.), Change Processes in the Public Schools (Eugene, Ore.: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1965), pp. 11-34.

6. See Appendix A.

7. Miles, op. cit., p. 28.

8. Halpin, op. cit., pp. 147-154.

9. Ibid., p. 155.

10. Ibid., p. 160

11. For a discussion of communality as an index of reliability, see Benjamin Fruchter, Introduction to Factor Analysis (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1954), p. 47. The communality represents a lower bound, or highly conservative estimate of reliability.

12. Halpin, op. cit., p. 174.

13. Ibid., p. 178.

14. Ibid., pp. 177-178.

15. Ibid., p. 177.

16. Fred D. Carver and Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Some Notes on the OCDQ," Journal of Educational Administration, 7 (May, 1969), pp. 78-81.

17. John H.M. Andrews, "Some Validity Studies of the OCDQ," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago, February 10, 1965.

18. Andrew W. Halpin, "Change and Organizational Climate," Journal of Educational Administration, 5 (May, 1967), p. 11.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN EIGHT OCDQ SUBTEST SCORES FROM HALPIN'S ORIGINAL DATA (N= 1,151)* AND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL DATA (N= 130)**

OCDQ Subtest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Teachers' Behavior								
1. Disengagement	1.00	.27(.28)	-.36(-.30)	.00(.05)	.18(.19)	.17(.05)	-.22(.12)	.04(.06)
2. Hindrance		1.00	-.32(-.27)	-.07(.08)	.15(.28)	.08(.13)	-.25(-.16)	-.15(-.05)
3. Esprit			1.00	.31(.32)	.09(.08)	.12(.11)	.60(.37)	.42(.31)
4. Intimacy				1.00	-.06(.13)	.11(.37)	.18(.29)	.31(.29)
Principal's Behavior								
5. Aloofness					1.00	.13(.50)	-.07(.17)	-.10(-.04)
6. Production Emphasis						1.00	.17(.34)	.19(.30)
7. Thrust							1.00	.49(.44)
8. Consideration								1.00

* From Andrew W. Halpin, "The Organizational Climate of Schools," in Theory and Research in Administration, (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 155.

** Non-public school correlations indicated in parentheses.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF THREE FACTOR SOLUTIONS FOR HALPIN'S ORIGINAL DATA (N= 1,151)* AND THE NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL DATA (N= 130)**

OCDQ Subtest	Social Needs I	Esprit II	Social Control III	h^2
1. Disengagement	.20(.06)	-.76(.02)	.20(-.81)	.66(.66)
2. Hindrance	-.04(.14)	-.64(.33)	.16(-.62)	.44(.51)
3. Esprit	.47(.60)	.70(-.03)	.11(.50)	.73(.61)
4. Intimacy	.71(.58)	-.06(.32)	-.17(-.02)	.53(.44)
5. Aloofness	-.31(-.03)	-.09(.83)	.79(-.20)	.72(.69)
6. Production Emphasis	.35(.34)	-.15(.79)	.62(.001)	.53(.74)
7. Thrust	.49(.70)	.62(.24)	.24(.22)	.68(.54)
8. Consideration	.78(.72)	.17(.03)	.06(.001)	.64(.52)

* From Andrew W. Halpin, "The Organizational Climate of Schools," in Theory and Research in Administration, (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 155.

** Non-public school correlations indicated in parentheses.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF ATTITUDES-TOWARD-CHANGE ITEMS' VARIANCE ACCOUNTED FOR BY OCDQ EIGHT SUBTESTS

Change Item	Percentage of Variance Accounted For
1. Independent study	.36
2. Team teaching	.34
3. Inquiry approach	.32
4. Computer assisted instruction (CAI)	.18
5. Modular scheduling	.15
6. Instructional television (ETV)	.15

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following survey items were especially selected for their relevance in getting at faculty and administrative staff perceptions involved in planning for possible school change. Responses to these items should be made on the accompanying single-page answer sheet. INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENTS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS AND NO SINGLE INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSES WILL BE IDENTIFIED. For this reason, on the accompanying single answer sheet do not write your name. Indicate only those departmental affiliations or other information items requested by the following instructions. Thank you.

On the accompanying single-sheet answer page, indicate your responses to the following 6 survey item statements. Circle with pen or pencil your ONE single strongest response to either Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD).

1. I would like to see modular scheduling initiated at _____ High School

2. I think we should try computer-assisted instruction (CAI) here at _____ High School.

3. I would like to see more use of the inquiry approach in our teaching here at _____ High School.

4. I would like to see more instructional use of television in the classroom here at _____ High School.

5. I would like to see us give team-teaching a good try here at _____ High School.

6. I think we should initiate more independent study approaches to instruction here at _____ High School.

Indicate on the accompanying answer sheet the extent to which each of the following statements* characterizes _____ High School. Select the one single response which in your judgment best describes the school --- 1. Rarely Occurs, 2. Sometimes Occurs, 3. Often Occurs, or 4. Very Frequently Occurs --- and place a check mark or "X" in that blank.

7. Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at this school.

8. The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.

9. Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.

10. Instructions for the operation of teaching aids are available.

11. Teachers invite other faculty members to visit them at home.

12. There is a minority group of teachers who always oppose the majority.

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13. Extra books are available for classroom use.

14. Sufficient time is given to prepare administrative reports.

15. Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.

16. Teachers exert group pressure on nonconforming faculty members.

17. In faculty meetings, there is the feeling of "let's get things done."

18. Administrative paper work is burdensome at this school.

19. Teachers talk about their personal life to other faculty members.

20. Teachers seek special favors from the principal.

21. School supplies are readily available for use in classwork.

22. Student progress reports require too much work.

23. Teachers have fun socializing together during school time.

24. Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in staff meetings.

25. Most of the teachers here accept the faults of their colleagues.

26. Teachers have too many committee requirements.

27. There is considerable laughter when teachers gather informally.

28. Teachers ask nonsensical questions in faculty meetings.

29. Custodial service is available when needed.

30. Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.

31. Teachers prepare administrative reports by themselves.

32. Teachers ramble when they talk in faculty meetings.

33. Teachers at this school show much school spirit.

34. The principal goes out of his way to help teachers.

35. The principal helps teachers solve personal problems.

36. Teachers at this school stay by themselves.

37. The teachers accomplish their work with great vim, vigor, and pleasure.

38. The principal sets an example by working hard himself.

39. The principal does personal favors for teachers.

40. Teachers eat lunch by themselves in their own classrooms.

41. The morale of the teachers is high.

42. The principal uses constructive criticism.

43. The principal stays after school to help teachers finish their work.

44. Teachers socialize together in small select groups.

45. The principal makes all class-scheduling decisions.

46. Teachers are contacted by the principal each day.

47. The principal is well prepared when he speaks at school functions.

48. The principal helps staff members settle minor differences.

49. The principal schedules the work for the teachers.

50. Teachers leave the grounds during the school day.

51. Teachers help select which courses will be taught.

52. The principal corrects teachers' mistakes.

53. The principal talks a great deal.

54. The principal explains his reasons for criticism to teachers.

55. The principal tries to get better salaries for teachers.

56. Extra duty for teachers is posted conspicuously.

57. The rules set by the principal are never questioned.

58. The principal looks out for the personal welfare of teachers.

59. School secretarial service is available for teachers' use.

60. The principal runs the faculty meeting like a business conference.

61. The principal is in the building before teachers arrive.

62. Teachers work together preparing administrative reports.

63. Faculty meetings are organized according to a tight agenda.

64. Faculty meetings are mainly principal-report meetings.

65. The principal tells teachers of new ideas he has run across.

66. Teachers talk about leaving the school system.

67. The principal checks the subject-matter ability of teachers.

68. The principal is easy to understand.

69. Teachers are informed of the results of a supervisor's visit.

70. The principal insures that teachers work to their full capacity.